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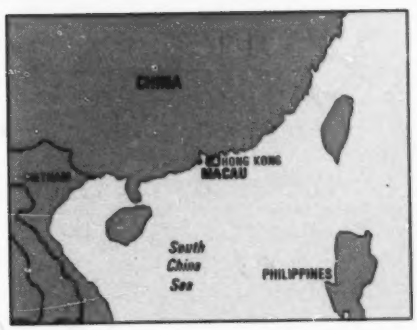
Macau

United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs

October 1982



Official Name: Macau

PROFILE

People

Term for citizens: *Noun*—Macanese (sing. and pl.). *Adjective*—Macau. **Population** (1979): 400,000. **Ethnic groups:** Chinese 99%, Portuguese 1%. **Religions:** Mainly Buddhist; about 17,000 Roman Catholics. **Languages:** Cantonese, Portuguese. **Literacy** (1981): Almost 100% among Portuguese and Macanese; no data on Chinese population. **Work force:** *Agriculture and fishing*—8.8%. *Industry and commerce*—68.3%. *Services*—12.2%. *Other*—10.8%.

Geography

Area: 15.5 sq. km. (6 sq. mi.). **Terrain:** Generally flat. **Climate:** Maritime tropical.

Government

Type: Portuguese administered. **Branches:** *Executive*—governor (head of government), president of Portugal (chief of state). *Legislative*—Legislative Assembly. *Judicial*—Special Courts (administrative), Ordinary Courts (civil and criminal). **Administrative subdivisions:** 2 districts—Macau and the islands of Taipa and Coloane. **Flag:** The flag of Portugal, one-third green (along the staff); remainder red. Centered on the dividing line is the Portuguese coat of arms surrounded by a golden sphere.

Economy

GDP growth rate (1981): 9%. **Per capita GDP:** $1,700.

Natural resources: None.

Agriculture: Rice and vegetables, but most foodstuffs are imported.

Industry: Fishing, textiles, fireworks.

Trade (1981): *Exports*—$670 million: textiles and clothing, manufactured goods, foodstuffs. *Major markets*— EC 41%; Hong Kong 22%; US 21%. *Imports*—$680 million: consumer goods, foodstuffs. *Major suppliers*—Hong Kong 37%, China 33%, Japan 11%.

Exchange rate (February 1982): 5.80 patacas = US$1; officially tied to US-Hong Kong exchange rate starting in 1977.

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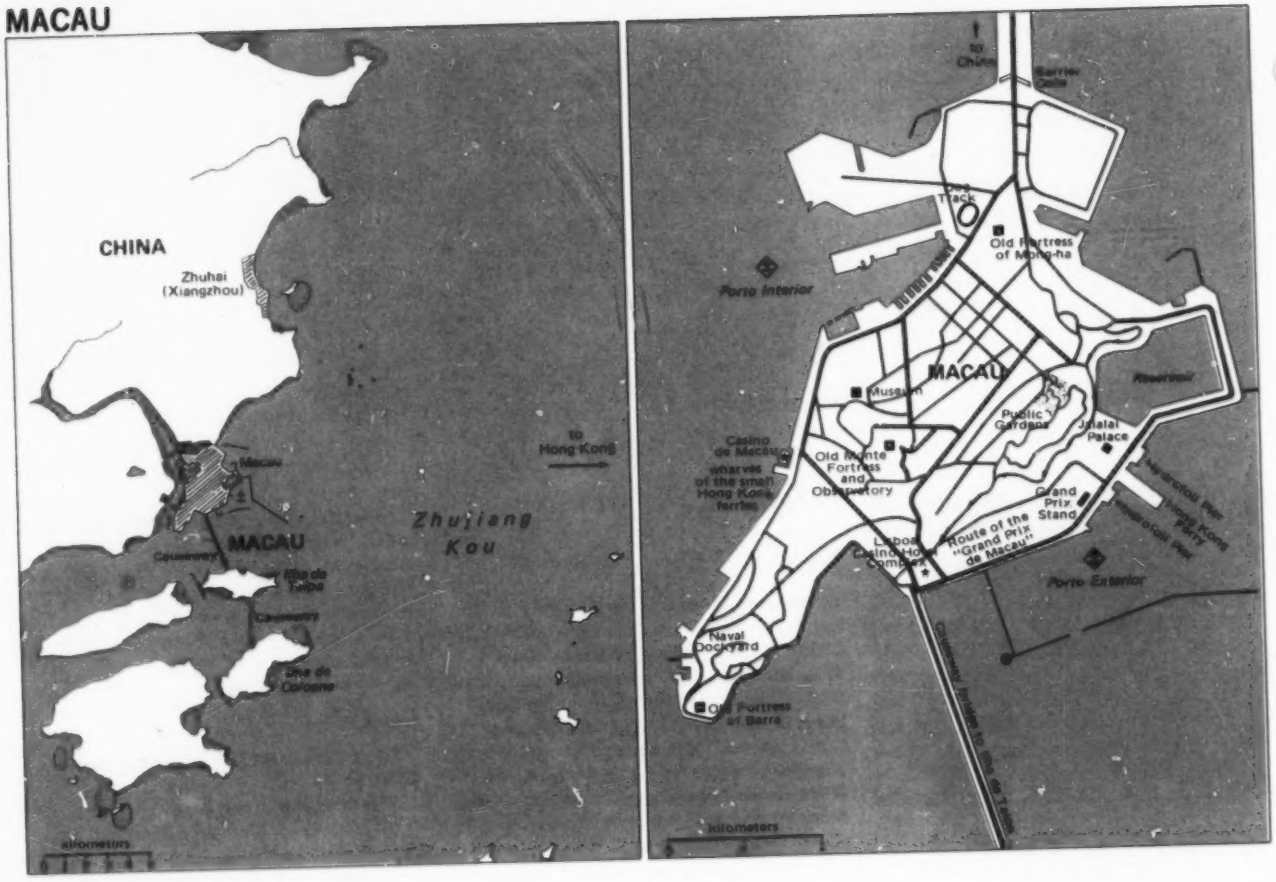
MACAU



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PEOPLE

About 99% of Macau's population are Chinese, primarily Cantonese and some Hakka, both from nearby Guangdong Province. The remainder are of Portuguese or mixed Chinese-Portuguese ancestry.

The official language of Macau is Portuguese, although Chinese (principally Cantonese) is spoken extensively.

Historically, Macau's Chinese population has tended to increase or decrease rapidly depending on conditions in China. During the World War II Japanese occupation of China, for example, the population was estimated to have grown to 500,000 from 245,000 in 1939.

GEOGRAPHY

Macau is located on the southern coast of China at the mouth of the Pearl River. The British crown colony of Hong Kong lies 27 kilometers (17 mi.) east across the Pearl River, and Guangzhou (Canton), capital of China's Guangdong Province, is 113 kilometers (70 mi.) north. Macau consists of the municipality of Macau, situated on a narrow peninsula, and Taipa and Coloane, two islands to the south.

Macau is low and flat. The territory has cool winters and warm, tropical summers. About 90% of the land area is urban, with only 10% agricultural. Macau is connected to Taipa by a bridge; a causeway links Taipa and Coloane.

HISTORY

Macau, the oldest European settlement in the Far East, was used by Portuguese traders as early as 1516 as a stopover on the way to Japan. In 1557, the Chinese agreed to Portuguese settlement of Macau but did not recognize Portuguese sovereignty. Although a Portuguese municipal government was established, the sovereignty question was not settled for more than two centuries. Until the mid-19th century, when Macau's Portuguese governor became directly responsible to the government in Lisbon, the Portuguese administration of Macau was under the authority of the viceroy at Goa in Portuguese India.

Initially, the Portuguese developed Macau's port as a trading post for China-Japan trade as well as for a staging port on the long voyage from Lisbon to Nagasaki. And, when Chinese officials banned direct trade with Japan, the Macau Portuguese carried goods between the two countries.

The first Portuguese governor was appointed to Macau in 1680, but the Chinese continued to assert their authority, particularly by collecting land and customs taxes. Portugal continued to pay rent to China until 1849, when the Portuguese abolished the Chinese customs house and declared Macau's "independence." But, it was almost four decades, on March 26, 1887, before the Manchu government acknowledged the Portuguese right of "perpetual occupation." The Manchu-Portuguese agreement, known as the Protocol of Lisbon, was signed with the condition that Portugal would never surrender Macau to a third party without China's permission.

During World War II, when the Japanese occupied Guangzhou (Canton) and Hong Kong, Macau enjoyed a brief period of economic prosperity as the only neutral port left in South China. In 1943, after violating Portuguese sovereignty on several occasions, Japan obtained a virtual protectorate over Macau. Japanese domination ended with the Allied victory in the Pacific in August 1945.

When the Chinese Communists came to power in 1949, they declared the Protocol of Lisbon to be invalid as an "unequal treaty" imposed by foreigners on China. Subsequently, however, Beijing stated that the Macau treaty problem need not be settled until "conditions are ripe," and then "peacefully through negotiations"; in the meantime, "the status quo should be maintained." Beijing took a similar position on treaties relating to the Hong Kong territories. A confrontation between local, leftist Chinese elements and the Macau police led to civil disturbances in November and December 1966. It was resolved in January 1967 with the signing of a protocol between the governor and leftist organizations. Relations have been peaceful and economically advantageous to both parties.

Portugal and China established diplomatic relations in 1979, and 1 year later, Gen. Melo Egidio became the first governor of Macau to visit China. The visit underscored both parties' interest in maintaining the status quo of Macau. Beijing continues to regard Macau's status as an issue to be settled when conditions are ripe, while Portugal considers Macau to be a Chinese territory under Portuguese administration.

GOVERNMENT

The governor of Macau is the ranking civil and military official. Nominated by the president of Portugal, the governor is assisted by five deputy secretaries responsible for the administration of key government sectors. A Legislative Assembly, set up in 1974 after the

Further Information

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on Macau. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Travel Notes

Customs—US passport holders must have visas to travel to Macau. Tourist visas can be obtained from the Portuguese Consulate in Hong Kong or upon entry to Macau from Hong Kong. No inoculations are currently required.

Transportation—Visitors can go to Macau from Hong Kong either by ferry (about a 3-hr. trip) or by hydrofoil or jetfoil (about 1 hr.). Taxis are plentiful and inexpensive. There are also public buses.

Hotels and restaurants—Macau hotels are relatively inexpensive and include modern luxury hotels, older Victorian-style hotels, and converted villas. Book in advance, particularly for weekends, holidays, or during special events, such as the Macau Grand Prix. Portuguese, Chinese, and European cuisines are available in Macau's restaurants.

Telecommunications—The larger hotels have facilities for overseas phone calls and cables. Overseas calls also can be made from the General Post Office. Macau has 13,000 telephones and 4 AM and 3 FM radio transmitters. Access to international communications carriers is via Hong Kong and China. Macau is 13 hours ahead of eastern standard time.

revolution in Portugal, consists of 18 members: the governor of Macau, 6 members elected by direct suffrage, 6 indirectly nominated—representing cultural, economic, and religious interest groups—and 5 appointed by the governor. The assembly's powers are limited. Macau is represented in Lisbon by one member in Portugal's National Assembly, elected by direct suffrage for a 4-year term.

In 1980, the Legislative Assembly proposed changes in the 1976 Organic Law of Macau, the territory's constitution. The changes, which would have increased the size and power of the Legislative Assembly, resulted in a brief dispute between some assembly members and Governor Egidio. The proposals were dropped, but the Legislative Assembly continues to be active. The current governor, Capt. Almeida e Costa, arrived in July 1981 and indicated that one of his first tasks would be to establish a regular dialogue with the Legislative Assembly.

Macau has two types of courts: special, for administrative purposes, and ordinary, for civil and criminal cases. Appeals from both may be made to higher courts in Lisbon.

Administratively, two districts (Macau and the islands of Taipa and Coloane) are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Civil Administration in Lisbon.

Principal Government Official

Governor—Capt. (Navy) Almeida e Costa

Portugal maintains an embassy in the United States at 2125 Kalorama Road NW., Washington, D.C. 20008 (tel. 202–265–1643).

ECONOMY

Macau's economy is based on light industry (textiles and fireworks), commerce, tourism, gambling, and fishing. Total 1981 export earnings were $670 million. The United States is one of Macau's leading export markets; the Federal Republic of Germany, France, and Hong Kong are also important customers. Portugal takes about 3% of Macau's exports.

Macau's primary industry is fishing, which is also the only significant source of food. Although small quantities of rice and vegetables are grown locally, most of Macau's foodstuffs and all of its fresh water are imported from China. In 1981, its imports amounted to about $680 million.

The province has no airfield or rail connections, but it can be reached by road from China and by sea. Regular ferries connect Macau with Guangzhou and Hong Kong, and frequent hydrofoil and jetfoil service is available to Hong Kong.

Macau's port is shallow and so heavily silted that the few ocean ships that call there must lie offshore. Most of Macau's trade, except with the interior of China, goes to and from Hong Kong by small, shallow-draft vessels. Of the estimated 4 million people who visited Macau in 1980, 3.4 million were Hong Kong residents; Japanese, British, American, and other foreign tourists exceeded 400,000. Among Macau's tourist attractions are its Mediterranean atmosphere in an oriental setting, its casinos, dogracing, jai alai palace, and the annual Macau Grand Prix automobile race.

Macau's unit of currency is the pataca, pegged to the value of the Hong Kong dollar on a one-to-one basis.

U.S. INTERESTS

The U.S. Government has no offices in Macau, which lies within the consular district of the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong.

Principal U.S. Officials

Consul General—Burton Levin
Deputy Principal Officer—Richard Williams

The U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong is located at 26 Garden Road, Victoria (tel. 5-239011). ■

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